

Why are careers appointments negatively impacting our Graduate Outcomes results?

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INTRODUCTION

In 2021, the Careers Centre undertook research in order to identify the level to which each project or initiative is instrumental in achieving short and long-term outcomes for University of Reading students and graduates. One outcome from this analysis was that attending an appointment with the Careers Centre was statistically more likely to lead to a 'negative' outcome in the Graduate Outcomes survey.

As such, in the summer of 2022, this research project aimed to help answer the question **"Why are careers appointments negatively impacting our Graduate Outcomes results?"**

WHY ARE WE INTERESTED IN THIS?

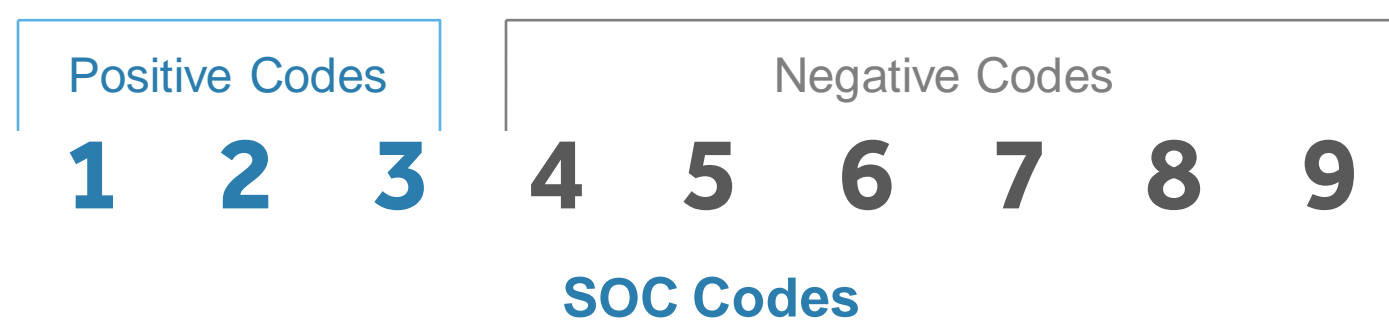
Whilst there is much evidence for the benefits of careers guidance (e.g. [Hooley and Dodd, 2015](#); [Hughes and Gration, 2009](#)), evidence of the impact of attending guidance appointments on positive graduate outcomes is more difficult to identify. In their research on adult advice and guidance, Pollard et al. (p. 37-38 2007, in Hughes and Gration, 2009) concluded that there was no association between in-depth support and observable labour market outcomes in the medium term, while [Bimrose et al. \(2006\)](#) investigated clients' perceptions of the 'usefulness' of their guidance interview in their exploration of the effectiveness of career guidance.

Given this, we were keen to better understand more about the negative correlation we observe between students attending careers appointments and reporting positive graduate destinations, and factors that might be influencing this.

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY 'POSITIVE' OUTCOME?

All graduates who completed a HE course in the UK after August 2017 are asked to take part in the Graduate Outcomes survey 15 months after they finish their studies in order to understand what our graduates are doing since leaving their course.

A **positive** outcome is classed as a student who is in Graduate Level employment or further study, identified by the SOC Code (Standard Occupation Classification Code) assigned against their job title/duties or the type of further study they are undertaking.



WHAT DOES A 'CAREERS APPOINTMENT' ENTAIL?

We use the term 'Careers Appointment' to mean a confidential 1-1 meeting between a staff member and students. In these appointments students can discuss any careers related topics they're thinking about, including tips for securing work experience, making their CV fit for purpose and so much more. Any changes in the names of appointments across the six years of data included in this research has been considered before analysis.

Note: We also have an appointment type called 'Careers Appointment' – this is one of many 'Careers Appointments' that we run.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS METHODS USED

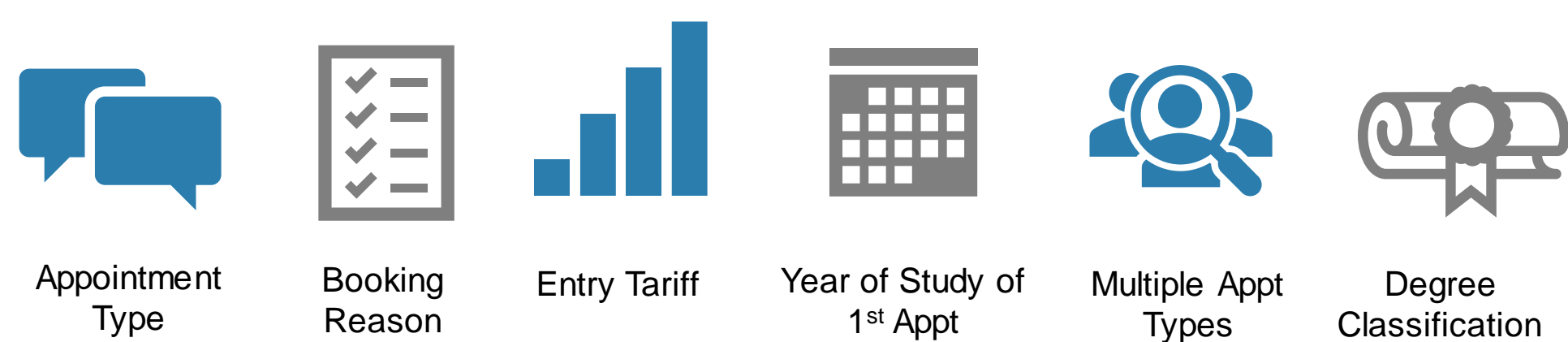
Chi-Square hypothesis testing

Chi-square tests provide us with findings focused specifically on whether an individual factor is significant or not; for example, whether the number of appointments attended is significant to the Graduate outcome. This is normally indicated using a **'P-Value'**.

Logistic Regression

Logistic regression can be used to give us insight into the nature of the significance of the result. This is particularly important, as it tells us whether the variable considered has a positive or negative effect. This is normally demonstrated using an **'Odds ratio'**.

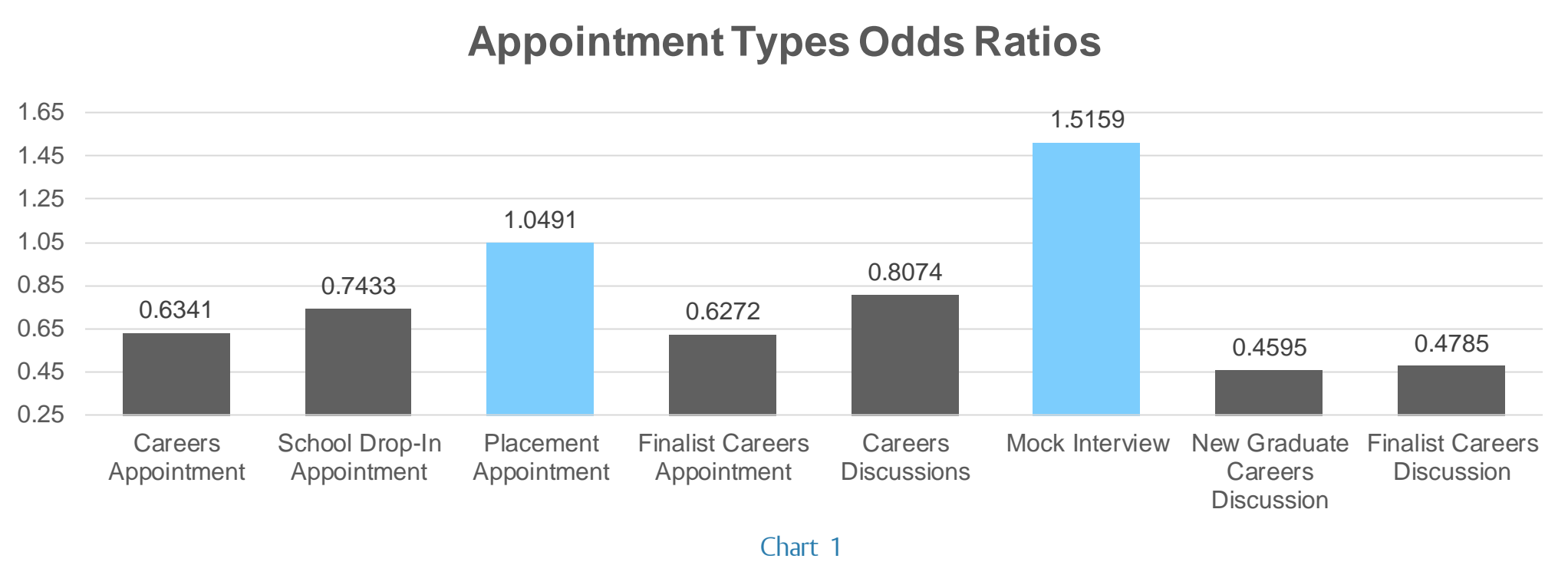
VARIABLES INVESTIGATED



RESULTS

Appointment Type

Placement Appointments and Mock Interviews are the only appointment types that returned an odds ratio >1 which indicates that the type is like to have a positive impact on outcomes (see Chart 1). Neither of these appointment types returned a significant p-value during Chi-square testing. Therefore, by isolating the types, we now see that they do not have a statistically significant impact on graduate outcomes.

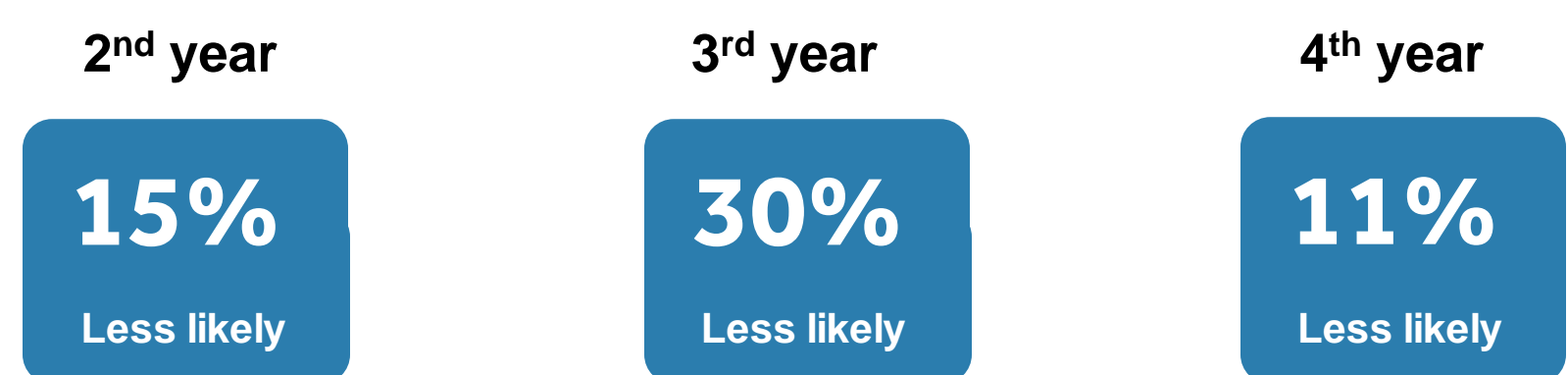


As most of the appointment types have a negative impact, **we can be confident that the type of appointment attended is not the reason for the negative outcomes.**

Year of Study of 1st Appointment

The results from this analysis indicated that while the results were not significant in the cause of the Graduate Outcome level, there is still a trend that can be seen which suggests that students who start in their first year of study are between 10% and 30% more likely to have a positive outcome, particularly compared to those who started in their 3rd year.

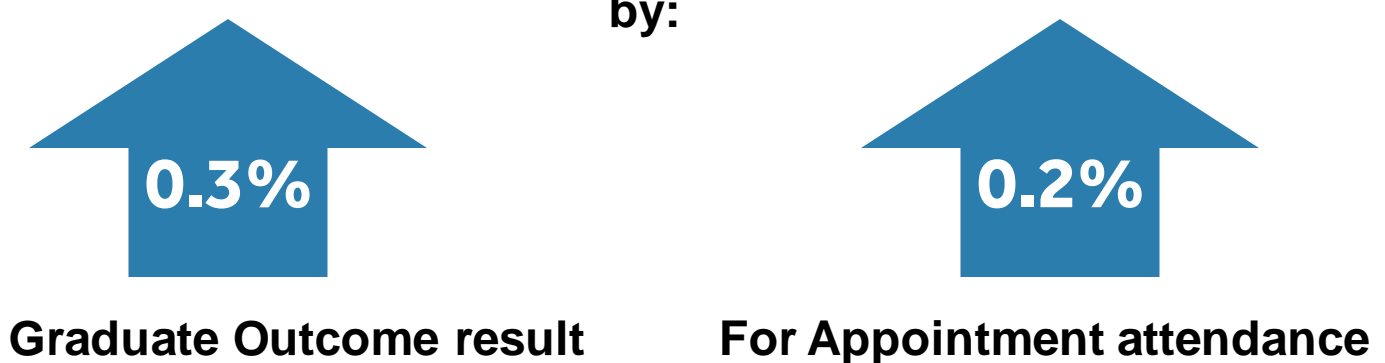
Compared to 1st year, students are less likely to achieve a positive outcome if they attend their first appointment in:



Entry Tariff

Our hypothesis for this analysis was that those with a lower entry tariff are more likely to attend appointments as they may be the students who need a bit more help. Analysis using continuous data indicated that using entry tariff as a variable was significant in both Graduate outcomes result and appointment attendance.

For each point increase in the entry tariff, the resulting outcome probability increased by:



This suggests, that the students who are more likely to attend appointments with the Careers service are **not those with the lower entry tariffs, but rather those who have a higher entry tariff**, invalidating our hypothesis.

CONCLUSIONS

While we have not been able to categorically answer the question posed at the beginning of the research, **we have been able to rule out some variables including appointment type, booking reason, year of study of first appointment and entry tariff.** Further analysis and data is needed to continue the investigation in more depth.

Reference List

- Hooley, T. & Dodd, V. (2015), [The Economic Benefits of Career Guidance](#)
- Hughes, D. and Gration, G. (2009), [Literature review of research on the impact of careers and guidance-related interventions](#)
- Brimrose, J. (2004), [What is Effective Guidance?](#)

Contact information

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